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ADDRESS AT MOONSHINE



ADDRESS  
TO THE GRADUATING CLASS  
MCMXI OF THE UNITRINIAN  
SCHOOL OF PERSONAL  
HARMONIZING

FOUNDED BY MARY PERRY KING  
AT MOONSHINE, TWILIGHT PARK  
IN THE CATSKILLS

By  
BLISS CARMAN  
||



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## ADDRESS AT MOONSHINE



CANNOT EASILY express the satisfaction I have in being asked to address the first class formally graduating from this School of Personal Harmonizing. Its establishment and prosperity are matters of far greater moment to me than the successful issue of any merely private aims and ambitions. Whatever anyone may hope to achieve in the world of art and letters, however disinterested and devoted, must be after all only a partial and individual success, the contribution of a single mind, of a single pair of hands, to the great cause of human happiness. Labor as we may in the limitless domain of art, we are only humble workmen still, restricted to the narrow confines of our individual power, capable of adding all too little to the world's splendid overflowing treasury,—our vogue destined to pass, our

novels, our operas, our poems, our paintings, our statues destined to be forgotten. But here in the establishing of a school for the education of personality, our feet are on the foundations of the world, partial aims are merged in those which are universal, and we become co-workers with the Lord of Life. We are no longer merely students acquiring knowledge for our own gratification, no longer merely artists proud in the perishable achievements of our skill, but seers and prophets of a new day, taking part in the creation of that better world which is to be.

Do you think my words too high-flown? Then, pray, to what greater tasks do you think we mortals can give ourselves than to the transcendent art and science and religion of human culture? May we not truly call education the most divine of all the arts, at once the most primitive and fundamental, the most ancient, modern and far-reaching. To create new forms of loveliness, as the artist does, for the enheartening and beautifying of daily life, is indeed a calling worthy of our

best endeavors; and happy are they who pursue it in any direction. But to create and illumine new spirits, to set new and larger boundaries for the outlook of the mind, to recreate and develop jaded bodies,—to fashion, in short, new personalities,—here surely is a labor really angelic, never to be accomplished without an unselfishness, an insight, and a devotion, that may truly be recognized as divine.

I speak thus loftily of the profession of teaching because I believe it to be so vital in our time. We live in a day of great spiritual awakening, when the soul of man, having so largely mastered the resources of material existence, is turning everywhere to secure the finer requisites of its being,—peace, security, joy. Our political and religious institutions are all on trial, summoned to the bar of incorruptible goodness, in the supreme court of the soul, to answer for their deeds,—not whether these have been good, but whether they have been the best. But all our economic and sociologic problems come back at last to the man and

the woman, to the single individual person. No machinery of government, no ingenuity of law, can procure for us the justice and innocence and gladness which our spirits with their incredible foresight so imperiously demand. There can be no making people free, nor honest, nor happy, in the mass. Only through education can we reach the goal; there is no other adequate panacea for misery; no other assurance of adequate happiness. Only by making boys and girls, men and women, more kindly, more sincere and brave, more courteous, honest, and industrious, can we make this generous and impartial earth more hospitable for human habitation, and life itself as glorious and fully significant as we instinctively believe it destined to become. Our days are stirring with the devoted deeds of men and women in every activity tending toward human amelioration and reform. In no direction can fine effort be more helpful, in no field can it bear more sure and imperishable fruit, than in the garden ground of education. Democracy, socialism, single tax, the referendum, and



a score of other devices for better government have their adherents and advocates. And we should all do well to form unbiased judgments on these subjects, and heartily espouse whatever social or political reform seems to us best. For widely as they differ in the means they propose to apply to flagrant ills, they are alike in the beneficence of their aims, and in their effort to secure justice from the unjust and to impose honesty upon the knave. But education is more radical; it would implant justice in every heart, and establish ideals of decency and fair play in every growing life.

I may very well, therefore, offer you my congratulations that you are to be engaged in a profession which is at once so dependent upon radiant ideals and of such immense practical importance. Education, as I have said, is not only one of the finest, but one of the greatest of the arts; it is indeed the mother art, the *alma mater* of genius, the preceptress of intelligence, the patient and unwearied foster parent of life. We are children of a cosmic matriarchy, sprung from the conscious

seed of time, formed in the teeming womb of space, quickened by the mysterious energy,—the spirit which makes all things one.

Our belief in a divine paternity has the sanction of immemorial tradition, but our feeling toward the maternity of nature is deeper and more instinctive still. Man is thrice born of woman; he is born a living spirit when he is first laid in his holy mother's arms; he is born a questing intelligence, when at her comfortable knees he first begins to lisp his mother tongue; and he is born at last to full physical manhood as the accepted lover of his worshipped maid. By the will of woman he is brought forth from eternal mystery; by the wisdom of woman he is given understanding; through the mating charm of woman he is made partaker in the destiny of his race. It is wrong to speak of children as little animals, as we often do,—unthinking and uncaring; they are more spirit than anything else, and their growth can only be entrusted safely to the spiritual foresight which mothers the race. From Solomon to Spencer men

have written and discoursed on the science of education; and myriads of brave strong men and women have given devoted lives for its fruitful maintenance, and for enlarging and perfecting its scope. For education to be adequate must be high and broad as well as deep; it must be lighted by inspiration, enriched by all the learning of experience, and fructified with all the lore of inherited skill. The lore of the creative arts and constructive sciences must be imparted by men, since it is in these domains that men have been supreme. But while the work of a man can only be learned from a man, to the deeper ranges of being, the sources of spirit, the springs of power, it is seldom permitted to man's rude reason to penetrate. These profound deeps of life, it would seem, must be forever in the maternal care of women. Man, the restless discoverer, inventor, innovator, compeller, is himself with all his ambitions sprung from a nature still profounder than his own, which broods upon the eternal things, and to whose calm soul all man's vaunted

knowledge and boasted deeds are but as dust upon the wind if they have not the saving inspiriting quality of love. We may know, but she understands; we may achieve and overcome, but she alone can teach us to rejoice. The reins of night and day are in her hands, and she will loose the bands of Orion in her own good time. This is the mystery of life, the impassable enigma.

You see I do not speak to you according to fashion nor tradition, but out of a fearless conviction, as if I were trying to write for you a poem worthy of the occasion, worthy of your Moonshine School, worthy of its founder. And poetry, we know, is sceptical of argument and will not rely upon logic alone. As a wise little sister once warmly exclaimed, "There are greater things than truth." I have forgotten what called forth the remark. I suppose she had been hearing some overglorification of the modern scientific spirit—some vaunting of our mannish idol. And this daring Emersonian phrase was the woman's instinctive claim for the transcendent wisdom of the soul

and its beneficent uses of truth. The unquenchable spirit, bent on happiness, on freedom, on ideals, which could utter that thought and in an instant strike down the demi-god of intellectual pride, demolishing our pretensions in a breath, is itself manifestation of a greater thing than mere truth. The faithful devotion which day by day and year after year, through toil, discouragement and dismay, brings its undefeated dreams to pass in works of helpfulness and beauty, is a greater thing than mere truth.

Yet see how, "When half-gods go, the gods arrive!" In these admissions we only pass to a wider view, a larger understanding of the quality and significance of truth. For the unitrinian, truth is hardly truth unless it has soul and body, unless it partakes of spirituality on the one hand and reality on the other. There are greater things than the conception of truth divorced from good and beauty; there is nothing greater than the truth that is allied to its spiritual origin and its physical fulfillment; for that utmost larger truth is

nothing less than the universal thought, the Logos, which must necessarily include not only infinite knowledge, but imperishable beauty and inexhaustible goodness in its triune perfection,—just as our partial knowledge is allied to sensation and emotion,—all fleeting and imperfect, yet forever inseparable. Truth is the second person of a sacred trinity; wherever voluntary good awakes & sensible loveliness is found, there is truth between them,—and there only. How monstrous and blind would all the arts and activities of men become, without the beneficent impulses of the soul, and the clear guidance of knowledge and reason! How sterile were the researches of science, with no attachment to the purposes and needs of life! How blighted and vain those religious exaltations which shut themselves away from the light of science, denying the ministrations of beauty and the sanctity of nature! All these are broken and false ideals of art, of science, of religion. But religion and science and art can never be really separable in their aims; they are the methods in

which a triune World-self chooses to realize its benign ideals; through them we share in accomplishing divine purposes; through them our darkling lives are illumined, and in their practice we ourselves are refreshed upon the doubtful way.

In your art, in your profession, it is with life and nothing less that you have to deal; it is life that you are called upon to foster and to mould. You are not mere teachers of theory, you are not mere trainers in technical accomplishments. You are, and you are to be, practitioners in the great art of human culture. Life is the precious medium committed to your hands, which you are to impress with your ideals, and form for its destinies by your influence for better or worse. And this process of transforming ideals into actualities, of bringing aspiration to its finest flower and fruition, is one of the greater things,—an inspiration of the Over-truth in whose light alone can life be worthily lived. I need hardly remind you that only those who have sought truth diligently with a devoted heart and an eager mind;

who have made it their honored counsellor and their inalienable friend; who have been willing for its sake to front the beleaguering hordes of doubt, discouragement, poverty, and unsuccess; who have seen it threatened at every turn by malevolence, chicanery, selfishness and fear; who have learned what faith and persistence are needed before it can prevail, (yet how radiantly and supremely it does prevail), only they can have any just conception of what must be added to truth to make still greater things.

As I think of the teacher's office and what constitutes a great teacher's fitness for that high vocation, the pre-eminent requisites seem to be, insight, courage, sincerity, knowledge, enthusiasm, all in an abounding degree, and above all an unflinching and unselfish devotion. Great insight, to perceive the student's needs; great courage and sincerity to arraign faults and convince of dangers at any risk; great knowledge to be able to substitute better ideals and habits for worse, to set wrongs right, and to supply the needed welcome



and nurture for growth; and a great, generous loving care for the plight of all necessitous beings in their baffling struggle toward perfection. For, as Herbert Spencer says, "Education is all that we do for ourselves and all that others do for us for the purpose of bringing us nearer the perfection of our nature." These exceptional helps, I know, you have found in the friend and leader with whom you have here been following this most liberal education.

Do not for a moment allow yourselves to fancy that because you are not a multitude, your school is small. For I tell you there is none greater—none greater in its destiny and in its service to the world. That inspired old man, Pestalozzi, with the simple faith of his childlike heart, was no less great because all his dreams and plans came to naught in his own day. His life seemed a series of failures, and yet how splendid a success! By reason of his loving spirit alone, with neither formulated system nor theory, he became the fairy godfather of modern education, the spiritual good

genius and forerunner of those who were to systematize and apply the spirit of his art. When Froebel gave up a livelihood in order to devote himself to his ideal—to put in practice the theory of objective education, and found only five young children, his sister's family, ready to receive his care, one would have called that a small school; and yet how great it was—great enough to influence all the teaching of the world! So to-day, it is not numbers that make greatness. Majorities may rule, but it is always the few who must save the world—the few to whom the seed of truth is revealed; the few that are illumined with a fervent and sublime faith, whom no hindrance can daunt, no falsity defeat; the few that are indomitable and persistent to the goal. You must always believe in the sorcery of your philosophy. In place of noisy applause, have you not the music of gladness? In place of crowded darkness, have you not light? In place of decay, have you not growth? In place of dreariness and uncertainty, have you not a charmed life?

I take it as a glad omen that you convene in Moonshine, and in the mountains. It is in moonshine that nature works her most magic transformations and lays her wonder-breeding spell upon the earth. It is in the mountains, lofty, serene, and remote, that freedom has been nourished and religions have been born. A stranger might see here only a company of intelligent students come together for the practice of new achievements and to listen to the discourse of an accomplished woman. But to me it is like Plato's academe, this atmosphere to which we have been admitted. I see that the Modern Spirit, which dissects all doctrines and holds fast only that which can prove itself true and desirable and comely,—which is forever questing, forever accomplishing, forever growing,—has here enunciated its latest revelation. Rousseau's plea for freedom, Pestalozzi's impassioned love of his fellow beings, Froebel's sagacious comprehension of nature's laws, Delsarte's profound and clarifying discovery, here begin to find their complete ful-

filment and utility. And the founder of your school, like her great predecessors in the science and art of education, has only come to this precious victory for her ideals after years of unremitting effort and discouragement, such as only those who are possessed by a sublime ideal can sustain. I need not rehearse the laborious study, the research, the sifting of one philosophy after another, the questioning, the weighing, the pondering, the teachers sought and listened to, the books read, the theories tested in costly practice,—all to be gone through with boundless enthusiasm and severely critical thought, before your school could be established. Neither you nor I, I am sure, can measure the lonely travail of spirit, the stress of body, and strain of mind, which must have been encountered on this difficult and glorious way. This teaching which seems so clear, so inspiring, so helpful, so conclusive, adequate and abounding, and which we are privileged to take so easily in such beautiful surroundings, was not so easily come by. A great life has been given to

secure it,—yes, more than one,—and we were dull indeed not to feel an obligation to carry our share of it worthily, with the bearing of Chaucer's Oxford student, of whom he wrote,  
“And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.”

Indeed your teaching calls for a scrupulous adherence to the finest code of ethics. Unitarianism has truly its religious note, as well as its philosophic and artistic. It appeals to the moral or emotional side of human nature, quite as much as to the intellectual and physical, for its sanction. The spiritual life comes quite as much within its province, as the other two. It conceives all three to be of equal importance, and their co-equal culture to be imperative for the education of the individual. And it concedes and inculcates the primacy of the spirit in all things, in conduct, in growth, in art. It perceives that there can be no successful issue in the world of knowledge and speculation, nor in the world of art and affairs, without the radiant leadership of the soul; and that any philosophy, any civilization, which is

careless of spiritual things, is doomed to frustration and failure. And the great proof of its validity is this, that it comes to us from nature, and is not a closed system contrived by a single mind. It is a happy discovery, not a clever invention. With its burden of spirituality, its passion for truth, its unashamed love of all lovely things, it is not come to destroy old systems, but to fulfill them. It would not subvert religion; its only hope is to strengthen man's heart. It would not conflict with science and philosophy; it would only make them more inspired and more human. It would not discount any of the arts of life; it would only lend them new meaning and vitality. And because it is not arbitrary and finite, but plastic and natural, it is applicable to the needs of every personality. It does not furnish patterns, it only upholds standards; so that, while it demands of us the utmost culture, it permits the utmost variety of character. It does not ask us to conform to any type,—neither in our creeds, our convictions, nor our pursuits. It only asks us

to be our best selves, to realize our finest ideals, to make the utmost use of all our powers. We cannot be good unitrinians, unless we learn to be glad-hearted; for joyousness is the native air of the soul. We cannot be true unitrinians, unless we learn to cultivate an eager and appreciative intelligence; for knowledge is the very food of the mind. We cannot be comely unitrinians at all, unless we develop our bodies in the freedom and health and grace which they are so capable of enjoying and utilizing; for happy achievement is the end of life, as happy love is its beginning, and happy learning its means of growth.

And this brings us more specifically to consider the tasks which are to be yours. Your particular field of teaching is the training of the growing body into harmony with the growing mind and spirit. This is the medium through which you are to influence personality and mould character. You are to reach to the inmost recesses of moral being, where the emotions and the will reside—to arouse, to encourage, to strengthen

human nature at its very source, and by offering it beautiful things to think about, to do, and say, educe from it beneficent habits of gracious and graceful activity; and by freeing the natural avenues of expression, motion and speech, you will stimulate the mind to clarify and express whatever thought and reflection life may have engendered there.

In this, your making of personality, you will use chiefly the three great rhythmic arts of music, poetry and dancing. Through the rhythmic spell of music, the most primitive, potent and universally appreciated of all the fine arts, you will lay a charm upon the willing spirit and awaken the most primal and most puissant instincts of capability. Through the rhythmic spell of poetry you will bring to the willing intelligence all "the best that has been thought and said in the world," (to repeat Matthew Arnold's happy phrase,) because in no other way can sublimated truth be conveyed. The poetry of the world contains the wisdom of the world; it is only in forms of po-



etry that wisdom receives its most perfect statement, and becomes food not only for the brooding mind, but for the deeper sub-conscious intuition as well. The full value of poetry does not lie in the charming magic of its cadences, nor in the unequivocal truth it embodies, nor even in its enraptured and orphic mode of speech, but in the fact that it blends all these characteristics together as the only language adequate to serve the threefold requirements of man's nature. All the sublime consolations of religion have come to us out of the ancient heart of the eternal in forms of poetry; and into forms of poetry must all the news of science and philosophy be transmuted again to serve the fullest purposes of life. And since poetry is a spoken art and depends for its ultimate beauty on the musical tones of the voice, your harmonizing training will not overlook the importance of good speech in your ideal curriculum. Finally, through the rhythmic spell of the dance and interpretive motion, you will free and strengthen, you will co-ordinate and

harmonize, you will beautify and make symmetrical the bodies and their conduct committed to your charge. In the ardor of your noble calling, so impersonal and universal in its aims, you will spread the lyrical cry,

“No glory is too splendid  
To house this soul of mine,  
No tenement too lowly  
To serve it for a shrine.”

In all these arts which are to be properly yours, you see, you will be dealing with the greater things. In the effort to forward the development of symmetrical human personalities, the first great requisite is freedom—freedom for the human body, as well as for the spirit and mind, for the salvation of the whole being in sanity and joy. For this cause you must forever discard, abandon, discredit and utterly condemn all artificial restrictions which hinder personal freedom and mar personal perfection, whether they be creeds or corsets, shibboleths or shoes, collars or conventions. Mind and spirit and muscle grow by use—

grow ill by ill use, and grow well by good use—but not by disuse. Our creeds and our shoes must be our own, fitted to our own measure, suited to our own need, large enough to allow free play, strong enough to withstand the roughness of the journey, but not cramped after grotesque prescribed inhuman pattern, nor accepted at any extraneous bidding. Yet for my soul's good, I would rather say my prayers to a painted idol than wear a pinching shoe. Sanguinary wars have been waged, nations have been disrupted, men have perished at the stake, for a good called freedom of conscience. Your fight will be for freedom of the body—not only freedom to breathe and move, but freedom to obey the behests of its own soul before all others. It is conceded well to have a sensitive conscience and a ready understanding. To possess all the faculties of an uninjured, cultivated and inspired physique, is a no less vital good, no less to be desired.

Edward Carpenter, the modern English seer, says “I am the prophet of hitherto unuttered joy!

All our faculties, all our instincts, are so much raw material to aid the life of the soul. The body is the root of the soul. To over-emphasize the body is to hide the soul; to despise the body as the ascetic, is as stupid and as disastrous as to despise the soul; to despise the soul is to miss the heights and subtleties and sweetnesses of all the wonderful functions of the body. The soul invading, makes the body its temple. Beware, lest thou make of it thy prison and thy grave, instead of thy winged abode and palace of joy."

As ministers of that fine culture, remember Whitman's magnificent line, "You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the soul."

You will often be discouraged in your task; for with all the mystic wisdom of which humanity is capable—the insight, the self-sacrifice, the nobility—there are still abysses of unreason from which at times it seems averse to stir. Yet do not argue overmuch. Sow the seed, and experience will plow it in. Sun it with fair example, and time will bring it to fruitage. Do all you can and

let God do the rest. He has ways unknown to rhetoric of bringing the soul to reason. And the secret of art's success is, that it passes the guards of prejudice unchallenged, and occupies the very citadel of the soul, before we are aware.

How should we not persist, and be confident and glad, unterrorized by life? We have been made possessors of a great doctrine, disciples of a great school of thought, which has its stated beginnings in this simple, yet beautiful house, in the inspiring loveliness of these ancient hills. The message is prepared; the door is open; the world is below. Let us not be laggard of foot, nor weak of heart, but of a good courage, as befits bearers of an untarnished gospel; for the benign Power which brings such revelations to man in their due season, will not fail us upon the road. Our threesided lantern will be sufficient for us through the forest and the night, until at last appear the kindling shafts of dawn bathing the lonely peaks in victorious rose and blue and gold,—the light of the All-beautiful, the All-wise, the All-good.

Doubt not the day is at hand. The stars in their rhythmic courses will be on your side; the waving grasses of the fields will give you help; and the wheeling birds of the air will companion you. You shall arise with the incense of morning to serve life every day anew, and with the going down of the sun you shall return to glad reflection and repose,—the spirit to its joy, the mind to its dreams, the pulse to its peace,—the ungrudging being to the unhasting eternal.

Moonshine,  
1 September, 1911.



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